

RENTAL HOUSING MEDIATION TASK FORCE  
MINUTES

July 1, 2009  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, California, 93101  
7:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL:

JOSHUA ALLEN	<u>X</u>	TRUDY PAUL	<u>X</u>
LEESA BECK	<u>X</u>	MARSHALL SHERRILL	<u>X</u>
BENJAMIN BUSH	<u>X</u>	BARBARA SMITH SHERRILL	<u>X</u>
SILVIO DILORETO	<u>X</u>	ROGER SIMPSON	<u>E</u>
JUSTIN DULLUM	<u>X</u>	SKIP SZYMANSKI	<u>X</u>
LYNN GOEBEL	<u>X</u>	SCOTT WEXLER	<u>X</u>
DANIEL HERLINGER	<u>X</u>	BRUCE WOLLENBERG	<u>E</u>

X = Present      A = Absent      E = Excused

Officers: Ben Bush Chair, Barbara Smith Sherrill Chair and Leesa Beck Secretary  
Staff Present: Andrea Bifano, Sr. Rental Housing Mediation Specialist

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Rental Housing Mediation Task Force (RHMTF) was conducted in compliance with the standards set by the Americans with Disability Act. No members from the public were present to address the RHMTF.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Marshall Sherrill made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2009 meeting. Scott Wexler seconded the motion and it passed. (April, May, and June 2009 meetings were cancelled).

4. CITY ADVISORY GROUP SEMI-ANNUAL RECRUITMENT:

A. City Council Appointments: June 30, 2009: The RHMTF had five vacancies prior to the Bi-Annual recruitment: Two Tenants, Two Landlords and One Homeowner. City Council made four appointments to the RHMTF on June 30, 2009: Trudy Paul (Homeowner), Roger A. Simpson (Homeowner), Joshua Allen (Tenant) and Lynn E. Goebel (Tenant).

B. Welcome Mediators: Three of the four newly appointed mediators attended their first RHMTF meeting: Joshua Allen, Lynn Goebel, and Trudy Paul. Each was given a mediation brochure, and A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlord' Rights and Responsibilities booklet, published by the Department of Consumer Affairs, and a staff business card.

5. RHMTF BY-LAWS:

Appointment of Subcommittee to Review and Make Recommended Changes to RHMTF By-Laws: It had been recognized that the RHMTF By-Laws had not been revised for some time. Staff, therefore, recommended that the board review the By-Laws to see if any changes were needed. Daniel Herlinger made a motion to approve the creation of a Subcommittee. Marshall Sherrill seconded the motion and it passed. Ben Bush appointed the Subcommittee members, which included himself as Chair, Barbara Smith Sherrill Vice Chair, Leesa Beck Secretary, Silvio Di Loreto, Founding Father of the Program and Bruce Wollenberg, (veteran mediator and Chair in 1986) and Andrea Bifano, Staff.

6. FY 2009-2010 PROGRAM FUNDING:

A detailed handout of the RHMTF Budget for FY 2009-2010 was distributed and reviewed.

Ben Bush, Chair shared that using the money from the Program's 2010 budget, and money carried over from the previous fiscal year, the RHMTF would continue to have one full time Lead Senior Rental Mediation Specialist, and two part time Rental Housing Mediation Aides. Changes in the budget were noted: 1. The City of Goleta did not renew their contract of \$20,000 with the RHMTF, due to budget issues. As a result, the RHMTF would not provide its services to the residents of the City of Goleta, as of July 1, 2009; 2. The RHMTF received \$25,000 from the City of Santa Barbara Human Services.

7. OUTREACH:

1. Fair Housing Proclamation: On April 21, 2009, Ben Bush, Chair accepted the Fair Housing Proclamation from the County Board of Supervisors on behalf of the RHMTF. The Proclamation was viewed for the board to see.

2. Santa Barbara City College Outreach: On April 28, 2009 Justin Dullum and Scott Wexler attended the outreach at Santa Barbara City College. They both received Mediation Training for their participation. They reported that the most common concern for tenants was not getting their security deposits refunded. Staff shared that in these situations, the RHMTF provides information on rights and responsibilities and sample letters so that the Tenant can help themselves before they pursue other remedies afforded to them.

Justin Dullum suggested scheduling future SBCC outreach events to coincide with other events happening at the College.

8. MANDATORY CITY STAFF FURLOUGH

104 Furlough Hours: The Chair shared, due to the City's budget deficit, that City of Santa Barbara employees would take a mandatory 13 days off during FY 2009-2010. He further stated this would result in a 5% pay cut. The furlough dates were announced (and made available on the City's website) as August 14, November 6, November 25, December 20-24, 26-31, January 2, October 12, and May 7, 2010.

9. RHMTF MEETINGS:

Discussion Regarding Date and Time of Meetings: Some mediators had expressed that it would be nice to hold our meetings at an earlier time. Following a discussion of possible times, Skip Szymanski made a motion to hold future meetings on the First Thursday of each month at 5:30pm. Barbara Smith Sherrill seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved, pending staff review and approval.

10. CASELOAD REPORT AND MEDIATION TRAINING:

March, April, and May & June 2009 Statistics: The statistics were distributed for review.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Leesa Beck celebrated the birth of twin boys Elias Rapheal and David Wesley on June 7, 2009.

Skip Szymanski shared that Second Story, a non-profit, of the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, was recently granted a tax identification number and non-profit status. Skip stated that in order to assist the RHMTF with their funding issue, they may be able to allow tax-free donations for the RHMTF to "pass through" their non-profit. He stated that the HASB and Andrea Bifano would explore this possibility.

Skip also announced that the Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County recently hired a new attorney to handle landlord/tenant issues. He suggested that we invite Becky Steiger to attend an upcoming RHMTF meeting.

The next meeting of the RHMTF will be held on Thursday, September 3, 2009 at 5:30pm.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

The RHMTF adjourned at 8:40pm.